

Euclid to address sewer rate increases

■ City sets public meetings for Saturday and also March 1

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Two public meetings have been scheduled in Euclid to address upcoming sewer rate increases that residents will face to foot the bill for intensive upgrades to the city's facilities.

In a letter to residents, Mayor Bill Cervenik estimated the increase to be about \$10 per month, a fee that is charged quarterly.

Members of city council, engineers and attorneys who are working on the project met earlier this month to discuss the technical aspects of the upgrades the city will be forced to implement to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

The sewer system the city has in place is inadequate, and in heavy rain it allows partially treated waste water, and even untreated, to be discharged into Lake Erie.

The upgrades that are slated to cost at least \$104 million will bring the facilities up to speed and ensure cleaner water quality and potentially more efficient procedures.

The most expensive option on the table is close to \$150 million and would provide newer technology for water treatment that has the potential for long-term savings, although this option still needs to be further investigated, officials said.

Cervenik assured residents in the letter that "city leaders diligently have and will continue to work on this project and are mindful of the impact it will have today and in the years to come."

The scope of work is large, with the city on a 10- to 15-year timeline to reach full compliance, and penalties are steep from the U.S. EPA if those standards are not met.

For example, if a particular violation occurs the city would be charged a \$1,000 fee for the first day, and it would quickly escalate as time passed.

The city has already made some of the improvements that will become necessary but

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awaits approval from the EPA for its long-term control plan.

A list of six alternatives are before the city with specific details of project plans, some of which would require residential land to be acquired to build or upgrade facilities.

The public meetings are scheduled at 10 a.m. Saturday, and again at 7 p.m. March 1.

Both meetings will be at the Euclid Municipal Center, 585 E. 222nd St.